

THE GARDEN COLUMNS

Fall / Winter 2021

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

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HUNTSVILLE BOTANICAL GARDEN



Different varieties of camellias bloom throughout the Garden from late fall to mid-spring, providing a pop of color amidst the muted tones of winter.

On the cover:

As dappled sunlight reaches through the trees of the Dogwood Trail, a bench waits to welcome guests who seek a moment of serenity.



Both annual and perennial grasses add color, texture, and movement to the Garden's diverse displays.



Greetings from our CEO

Hello everyone!

As the days grow shorter and the weather grows cooler, the Garden seems to go quiet. But look closer, and you'll see an entire ecosystem bustling with activity! Leaves transition from bright green to vibrant orange and red before drifting lazily to the ground, forming small piles where insects can rest safely through the winter. Camellias, winter jasmine, and hollies add pops of color to the Garden with their blooms and berries, while spring- and summer-blooming perennials rest for the upcoming seasons.

The fall and winter months are a time of celebration, as families and friends gather to reflect on fond memories and to create new ones together. Here at the Garden, there are so many ways to celebrate this season:

In November and December, experience the holiday tradition of Galaxy of Lights by taking a stroll through Walking Nights or cruising through Driving Nights. From nostalgic favorites to new features that will surprise and delight, Galaxy of Lights is full of holiday fun for the whole family.

In March, we are excited to bring you a new, larger-than-life art experience: Stickwork by Patrick Dougherty. Tucked away in the Garden and built from locally sourced sapling branches, the giant structure will twist and turn to create an interactive installation for visitors to explore. Stickwork will offer guests of all ages a chance to play, imagine, and find inspiration in nature.

In this issue, you can take a closer look at our accredited trillium collection, get in the holiday spirit with Galaxy of Lights, take flight with our bird programs, and so much more. We hope you find inspiration in these pages to connect with nature in new ways this season, both at the Garden and in your community.

See you at the Garden!

Sue Wagner

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The Life of a Tree: Step 1

Trees start out as seeds, which come from fruit, flowers, or cones, and can be planted or spread naturally.



What's Inside



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Your Fall & Winter Checklist for Home Garden Success



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Feathered February

and more!

Visit Us:

In Person: 4747 Bob Wallace Ave.
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Email: info@hsvbg.org

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Who We Are

Open year-round, the Huntsville Botanical Garden contains diverse ecosystems to explore within its 112 acres. From grassy meadows to woodland paths, aquatic habitats to stunning floral collections, the Garden invites guests of all ages to discover the beauty and wonder of the natural environment.

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the Garden is an ArbNet-accredited arboretum and a member of the American Public Gardens Association, the North American Plant Collections Consortium, the American Horticultural Society, and Botanic Gardens Conservation International.

Events & Exhibits at the Garden

JUNE 11 – OCTOBER 31



SEPTEMBER 4 – OCTOBER 31



NOVEMBER 11 – JANUARY 1



JANUARY 15 – FEBRUARY 28



OPENING MARCH 4



NOVEMBER

**OCTOBER 18 –
DECEMBER 31**

Art at the Garden | Jauneth Skinner

11 Veterans Day – Free daytime admission for military personnel and immediate family members

11 - 28 Galaxy of Lights Walking Nights (Closed Thanksgiving Day)

15, 16, 22, 23 Galaxy of Lights Dog Walking Nights

29 Galaxy of Lights 5k Race

30 Galaxy of Lights 3k Fun Run

DECEMBER

December 2 - January 1 Galaxy of Lights Driving Nights (Closed Christmas Day)

MARCH

MARCH 1 – APRIL 25

Art at the Garden | Tina Swindoll

Save the Date

Spring Plant Sale

APRIL 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23

Spring Hat Luncheon

MAY 5

The Life of a Tree: Step 2

When a seed is planted, it grows a root down into the soil and a sprout up toward the light.

Youth & Adult Programs

NOVEMBER

4, 11, 18 Woody Winter Wonderland | Virtual Class Series

9, 11, 20 Nature Academy | Exploring the Fall Harvest

DECEMBER

7, 9, 11 Nature Academy | Getting to the Root of It

11, 16 Fresh Wreaths: What to Grow and How to Make Them | In-Person Class

JANUARY

11, 13, 22, 25, 27 Nature Academy | Nature Needs Our Help!

FEBRUARY

8, 10, 19, 22, 24 Nature Academy | Wonders of Water

18 - 21 Great Backyard Bird Count

MARCH

8, 10, 19, 22, 24 Nature Academy | Underground Adventures

14 - 18 Spring Break Camp

18 Raptor Shows

Also coming in March: The Art of Sustainable Science

APRIL

5, 7, 16 Nature Academy | Plants and Water



Stickwork

by Patrick Dougherty

Opens March 4, 2022

Included with regular Garden admission

Learn more at hsvbg.org/stickwork

Ready or Not (2013) North Carolina Zoo, Asheville, NC. Photo: Juan Villa

DID YOU SEE THE BUTTERFLIES?

We loved seeing your photos during Peak Butterfly Season! The butterflies will return to the Purdy Butterfly House in May 2022.



Photo by Chris Baker @c_scott_photo



Photo by Chris Baker @c_scott_photo



Photo by Jessica Alldredge @lifeinbama



Photo by Harry Dean @ibird_2



Photo by Chris Baker @c_scott_photo



Want to see your own pictures in the magazine?

Tag us in your Garden photos on social media using **#hsvgarden**, and we may feature them in a future issue!



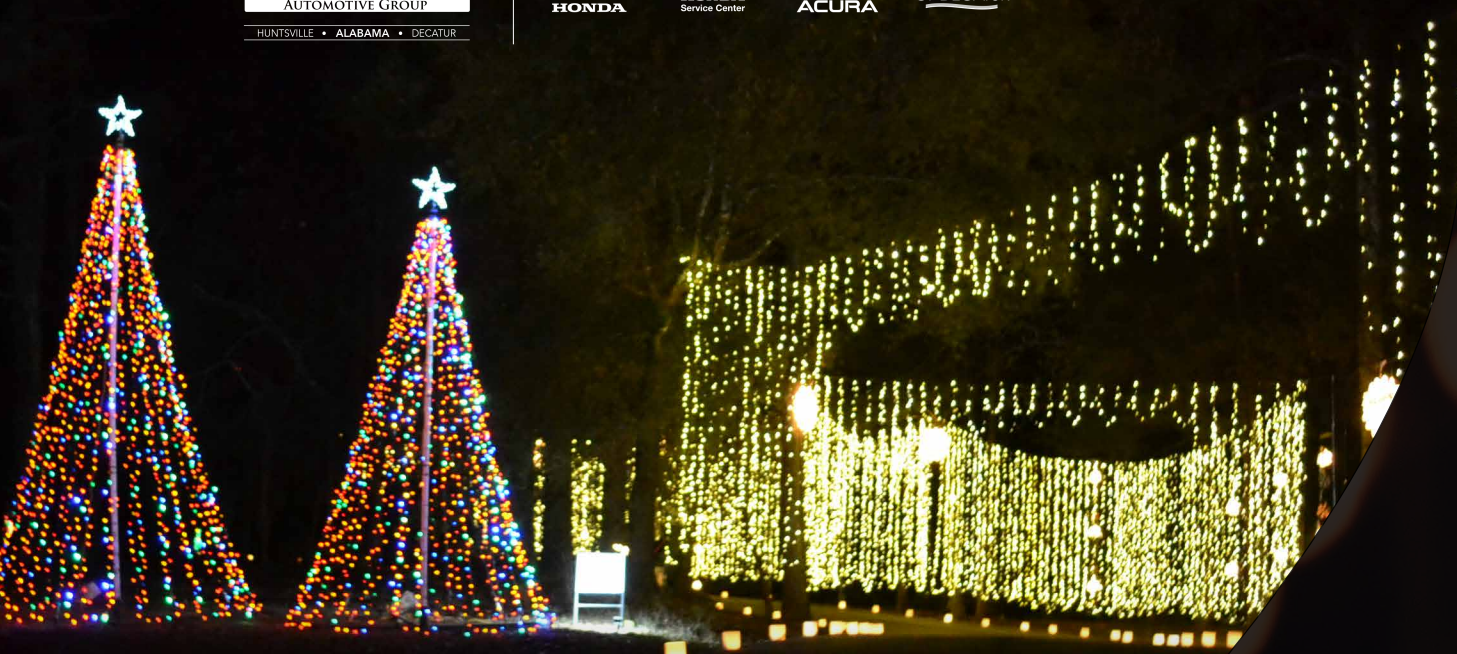
The Life of a Tree: Step 3

Seedlings develop leaves to soak up sunlight for photosynthesis and roots to absorb water and nutrients.

Galaxy of Lights

**JERRY
DAMSON**
AUTOMOTIVE GROUP
HUNTSVILLE • ALABAMA • DECATUR

Presented by



The Life of a Tree: Step 4

Saplings are baby trees that grow rapidly. This is commonly the stage of trees you would buy in a nursery.



FUN FACT:

Galaxy of Lights was voted

#2 Best Botanical Garden Holiday Lights in the country last year!

Get in the holiday spirit with Galaxy of Lights!

Galaxy of Lights is a regional holiday tradition that happens every November and December at the Garden. For over 25 years, we have welcomed guests from near and far to explore the magnificent light displays and enjoy the Garden when it's decked for the holiday season. With both walking and driving experiences, Galaxy offers guests of all ages the chance to share in the beloved tradition and make memories together.

Last year, in celebration of the 25th Anniversary Season of Galaxy of Lights, we introduced a new immersive experience to the route for Walking Nights, combining traditional light displays with modern technology and special effects. This year, we are thrilled to be expanding on these popular additions by introducing even more surprises!

During Walking Nights this year, you will see brand new light displays that transform the Garden's natural landscape with light. You will also travel along a special walking path through the interior of the Garden, making Walking Nights a unique and distinct experience from Driving Nights. But long-time Galaxy-goers need not fear: These new elements will be combined with the familiar Galaxy features you know and love, blending nostalgia and novelty into a magical experience that is as dazzling as ever.

Another reason to cheer this year: The Galaxy races are back! The Galaxy of Lights 5k Race and 3k Fun Run are your chance to experience Galaxy on a one-of-a-kind run (or walk!) through the displays. After a hiatus in 2020, we are delighted to once again offer these popular Galaxy events.

And to top it all off, all proceeds from Galaxy go directly to support the mission of the Garden. Whether you volunteer at the event, sponsor a light display, or buy a ticket, you are helping us serve our community as a source of plant conservation, education, and beauty all year long.

Be a part of the Galaxy tradition!

Volunteer at Galaxy:

Email volunteer@hsvbg.org to learn about the many volunteering opportunities at Galaxy.

Sponsor a Display:

Email development@hsvbg.org to learn how you can support Galaxy through sponsorship.

Purchase Your Tickets:

Visit hsvbg.org/Galaxy to reserve your tickets today!

When Will We See You at Galaxy of Lights?

Walking Nights

November 11 - 28

Closed Thanksgiving Day

Dog Walking Nights

November 15, 16, 22, & 23

Every Monday & Tuesday during Walking Nights

Driving Nights

December 2 - January 1

Closed Christmas Day

Galaxy of Lights

5k & 3k

November 29 & 30

Learn more and purchase tickets at hsvbg.org/Galaxy

FUN FACT:

Last year, we celebrated the **25th anniversary** of Galaxy of Lights. Now, we are looking forward to celebrating the next 25 years of this beloved holiday tradition!



Trillium Family Tree

Tucked away along the Mathews Nature Trail, a sea of three-leaved plants sprouts up from the soil below. Small, unassuming, and dormant for most of the year, they are often overlooked by visitors winding through the paths, searching for a glimpse of the flamboyant azaleas. Some visitors stop to read the tiny placards scattered throughout the beds: “Trillium,” each one reads, followed by its own unique Latin name. The trillium may not be a showstopper, but to those in the know, the trillium collection in the Holmes Trillium Garden represents something truly special.

On a warm April day, a group of plant scientists from HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology, along with a Huntsville Botanical Garden staff member and volunteer, toted their coolers, test tubes, and clipboards out to the Mathews Nature Trail and the Bush Azalea Trail to begin their data collection. A single leaflet was snipped off of each of 39 distinct Eastern trillium species before being labeled, preserved, and taken to a lab to be studied. The scientists were after one very important element contained within the leaflets: chloroplasts.

Chloroplasts are organelles found in leaf tissue that carry out photosynthesis and contain important genetic information. By studying the leaf samples collected from the trillium collection at the Garden, scientists can use the genetic information in chloroplasts to determine how different species are related, shedding light on an understudied native plant.

Trillium are known for having a multitude of distinct subspecies, which have come about due to isolation as a result of topography, geology, and other factors. This broad variety creates a fascinatingly diverse genus, but it also poses a problem for researchers, as it can be difficult to determine the origins and relatives of each species. That’s where the Huntsville Botanical Garden comes in.

Over 90% of the trilliums found in North America are represented in the Holmes Trillium Garden,

allowing scientists to uncover a great breadth of genetic information without having to travel across the continent to collect it. By studying samples from the trillium collection in the Holmes Trillium Garden, scientists can gain valuable insight into an entire genus, right here in Huntsville.

The Garden’s vast plant collections offer a diverse living laboratory for scientists interested in conducting research on a variety of native species. The trillium project is paving the way for future studies here at the Garden in collaboration with regional, national, and even international research partners. “I’m excited for the future of training more botanists and genomicists in the Huntsville area, using the Garden as a platform,” said Alex Harkess, the HudsonAlpha Faculty Investigator leading the trillium project.

Did you know?

The Holmes Trillium Garden is home to endangered trillium species such as *Trillium reliquum*, which are being protected and cultivated by expert horticulturists. If any of these threatened species was to die out in the wild, the plants safeguarded at the Garden could be outsourced to rehabilitate the population, preserving the species for generations to come.

The trillium collection in the Holmes Trillium Garden is nationally accredited by the Plant Collections Network, a collaboration between the American Public Gardens Association and the USDA Agricultural Research Service. This honor is awarded to institutions exemplifying a high standard of excellence in plant collections management and preservation.



Volunteer Spotlight: Harold Holmes

The Holmes Trillium Garden is named in honor of Harold Holmes, who began volunteering at the Garden in 2006 with the goal of creating a nationally recognized trillium display. Harold’s love for trillium began in the late 1990’s, when his wife asked him to help propagate wildflowers for her garden. When he tried to propagate trillium, he encountered a challenge, as it can take 10 years for trilliums to grow from a seed to a plant in bloom. Using his background in engineering research, Harold took this challenge head-on. Soon, his trilliums could transform from a seed to a blooming adult plant in only four years.

In 2015, the trillium collection in the Holmes Trillium Garden achieved Plant Collections Network Accreditation, a designation granted by the American Public Gardens Association in collaboration with the USDA Agricultural Research Service. As a nationally accredited plant collection, the Holmes Trillium Garden serves as a reference for research, education, and conservation.

In addition to propagating and researching the diversity of the species, Harold has gone on “Trillium Treks” to rescue trilliums in the wild when their habitats are threatened.

Harold’s passion for this diverse, highly regarded native species has resulted in an incredibly valuable collection here at the Garden.



The Life of a Tree: Step 5

There are two types of trees: deciduous and evergreen. Deciduous trees lose their leaves in the fall, but evergreens keep their foliage year-round.



The Impact of a Summer at the Garden



The Life of a Tree: Step 6

Spring brings lots of sunlight, which helps trees produce chlorophyll, the pigment that gives leaves their green color.

As the heat of the summer fades into the crisp air of autumn, several youth programs at the Garden come to a close. Summer camps end as campers head back to school, and the youth volunteer corps completes final projects to wrap up their summer of service. But even as these seasonal programs end, their impact on participants extends far beyond the summer months.



This past June and July, over 400 campers between the ages of 5 and 13 participated in the Garden's summer camps, exploring the outdoors and discovering science in nature firsthand. With hands-on activities led by certified counselors, campers not only made friends and had fun: they also took home a deeper personal connection to the green spaces around them.

“We notice that [our son] is quick to point out the flora we see when we’re out and about,”

said LaDonna McCann, whose 10-year-old son attended camp at the Garden for six weeks this summer. With a background in environmental science herself, McCann could see how her son’s time in camp had an impact on how he saw his own environment.

Jessica Green, whose six- and eight-year-old daughters also attended camp this year, had a similar experience with her young learners.

“Every day, they were coming home telling me fun facts about something,” said Green. **“I liked [knowing] they were actively learning, and they were getting their hands dirty [at camp].”**

And at the end of the day, was it a positive experience? Did the kids have fun? Both McCann and Green agree: yes, they definitely did.

“He’s still talking about it with his friends – I think he’s recruiting,”

McCann said with a laugh.



Meanwhile, campers were not the only ones bringing lessons from the Garden home this summer.

Launched this year, the Garden’s first-ever Youth Volunteer Program welcomed 30 volunteers between the ages of 13 and 18 to explore careers in the green sector by working at the Garden. Together, the youth volunteer corps contributed nearly 1,300 hours of service in June and July, working directly with the Garden staff to support mission activities in horticulture, environmental education, and plant conservation.

At the end of the summer, each volunteer created a “Personal Environmental Action Plan,” describing ways they could make a difference in their environment. From reducing single-use plastics to encouraging the repopulation of native plants, these

teenagers pledged to take action to steward the green spaces around them.

For one volunteer, taking action has already become a reality.

“[The program] inspired me to take care of the garden in [my] backyard,”

said Angela Ai, a high school sophomore who got to work taming her family’s unkempt garden after completing the Youth Volunteer Program.

“[Participating in the program was] a really good opportunity to work outside, work with new people... learning about ways we can take care [of] and benefit our environment,” she added.

Following the completion of the program, the young volunteers were asked to complete a survey containing a series of questions about their connection to the environment, and nearly every participant agreed: “Behaving responsibly toward nature is important to who I am.”

Of course, not every youth volunteer will grow up to be a plant scientist or an environmental researcher, just like not every camper will remember the names of all the plants they learned about at summer camp. But the impact of these youth programs is rooted in the curiosity piqued and the inspiration sparked. After spending time at the Garden, participants begin to see the world around them differently, and that is the impact that will last long after the final days of summer have drawn to a close.

Your Fall & Winter Checklist for Home Garden Success

Follow these easy tips to help keep your garden healthy and your plants happy!

October

- ☐ Start planting trees, shrubs, and perennials.
- ☐ Prepare potted plants to be brought indoors by pruning, treating pests, and acclimating them to the indoor environment.
- ☐ Plant cold-season crops such as kale, broccoli, and Brussels sprouts.

November

- ☐ Plant spring-flowering bulbs such as daffodils and tulips by Thanksgiving.
- ☐ Turn off irrigation systems and drain their lines.
- ☐ Compost fallen leaves and plant debris.

Did you know? Some beneficial insects create their habitats in plant debris, so be sure to leave some leaves on the ground for the bugs!

December

- ☐ Harvest hollies and evergreens for indoor holiday decorations.
- ☐ **Make your own festive wreath** in our wreath-making classes on December 11 & 16!
- ☐ Start pruning established shrubs and trees. Look for crossed, diseased, and broken branches.
- ☐ Safely sharpen, clean, and oil tools and pruners.

January

- ☐ Keep bird feeders full, and refresh water during freezing temperatures.
- ☐ Begin planning seed orders for your spring garden.
- ☐ Avoid walking on lawns during a frost to protect your grass from damage.

February

- ☐ Get your soil tested to ensure it is ready for spring plantings.
- ☐ Mulch all plantings to keep your garden polished and protected.
- ☐ Show your plants some love by starting to prune ornamental grasses, roses, and perennials around Valentine's Day.

March

- ☐ Start dividing perennials and ornamental grasses to create more plants to enjoy.
- ☐ Prepare your vegetable garden for spring by tilling the soil and selecting seeds.



The Life of a Tree: Step 7

In the summer, trees work hard to produce flowers and fruit that will spread their seeds.



The Life of a Tree: Step 8

With less sunlight in the fall, deciduous trees' leaves change color as they stop producing chlorophyll.

Quiz Time!

How Well Do You Know
the Garden?

1. What year did the Huntsville
Botanical Garden open?

- ☐ A 1952
- ☐ B 1988
- ☐ C 2017

2. What plant collection at the Garden
has achieved Plant Collections Network
Accreditation?

- ☐ A Bush Azalea Trail
- ☐ B Van Valkenburgh Daylily Garden
- ☐ C Holmes Trillium Garden

3. What is the newest enhancement
to the Children's Garden?

- ☐ A Tweetsville
- ☐ B Storybook Garden
- ☐ C Pollywog Bog

4. The Garden's mission is to
connect people to _____.

- ☐ A Animals
- ☐ B Plants
- ☐ C Rockets

5. What is the best time of year
to visit the Garden?

- ☐ A Spring/Summer
- ☐ B Fall/Winter
- ☐ C All of the above

Answers and
scoring on
page 16!



Love grows at the Garden

Now booking weddings
in 2022 & 2023

hsvbg.org/weddings

weddings@hsvbg.org

256-830-4447 ext. 251

Photo by Eric & Jamie Photography

"We loved our Garden wedding!
... Their staff is so friendly,
accommodating and kind,
and we couldn't have picked
a more perfect venue for our
dream wedding. ... Thank
you so much for making our
wedding day perfect!"

- **Christian S.**
Married in September 2020

Answer
#1

B. 1988

The Huntsville Botanical Garden opened to the public in 1988. What began as an idea in the minds of fourteen visionaries has grown into a thriving, 112-acre garden dedicated to connecting people to the beauty of nature all around them.



Answer
#2

C. Holmes Trillium Garden

The trillium collection in the Holmes Trillium Garden is accredited by the Plant Collections Network, a collaboration between the American Public Gardens Association and the USDA Agricultural Research Service. See pages 10-11 for more information on important trillium data collected right here at the Garden!



Answer
#3

A. Tweetsville

Designed to explore the vital role of birds in our ecosystem, Tweetsville is a learning journey for all ages. Did you know the best time of year to spot birds at the Garden is in the winter? Come visit Tweetsville this winter to say hello to all of your feathered friends!



Answer
#4

B. Plants

The Garden exists to connect people to plants! Through our educational programs, exciting exhibits, and stunning plant collections, the Garden demonstrates the connection between people and their natural environment, as well as the ways we can all help protect and preserve the unique biodiversity of our region.



Answer
#5

C. All of the above

The Garden is beautiful in every season! In the fall and winter, the trees are the star of the show, with the changing colors of the leaves and the architecture of the branches. When you visit the Garden this fall and winter, be sure to look up so you don't miss the unique beauty of the trees!



QUIZ ANSWERS

How many questions did you get right?

0-1

Come see us soon to learn even more about the Garden!

2-3

Not bad! You're on your way to being a Garden expert!

4-5

Well done! We can't wait to hear **YOUR** favorite Garden fact next time you visit!

The Life of a Tree: Step 9

Deciduous trees lose their leaves to conserve water and energy for the cold winter months.



Feathered February

Birds play a vital role in our ecosystem, and the Garden is a great place to learn about and see birds of all kinds. During the month of February, we show our appreciation for our feathered friends with events and educational programs for the whole family!

Great Backyard Bird Count

February 18-21, 2022

Every year since 1998, bird enthusiasts and nature lovers around the world have taken part in this four-day citizen science project to collect data on the distribution and abundance of bird species. In 2021, over 300,000 participants counted nearly 7,000 bird species in 190 different countries...and some of those birds were counted right here at the Huntsville Botanical Garden! At the Garden, we will have bird checklists and observation sheets available so that you can take part in this global event.

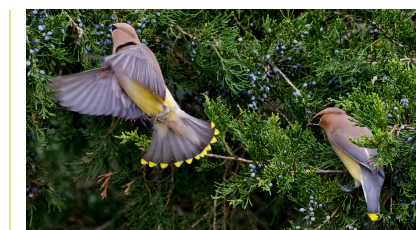
Why do we need to count birds?

The information collected during the Great Backyard Bird Count helps scientists understand bird populations so that they can better protect and care for our feathered friends.



Lewis Birding Trail

February is an ideal time for bird watching, and there is no better place to spot native and migratory birds than the Lewis Birding Trail! Dedicated in honor of longtime Garden volunteers Herb and Terry Lewis, the Lewis Birding Trail is devoted to the conservation, education, and enjoyment of birdlife. The trail winds through the Garden's diverse ecosystem of meadows, upland and bottomland forest, wetland, and native wildflower and azalea gardens and highlights a large variety of local and migrating birds.



Morning Bird Walks

Check hsvbg.org/events for dates

Join birding expert Herb Lewis on a morning walk through the Garden to seek, spot, and identify birds in their natural habitat. With Herb as your guide, you will learn how to look for local and migrating birds, explore what kind of landscape attracts them, and come to see why the Garden is a hotspot for a multitude of bird species. Suitable for expert and novice birders alike, this is an authentic birding experience you won't want to miss.

Did you know? The Garden is listed as a birding hotspot in eBird, a global birding data project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology!

National Bird Feeding Month

February

Show some love to our feathered friends this February! Created in 1994 to educate the public on the importance of supporting wild birds, National Bird Feeding Month encourages participants to provide food, water, and shelter for the birds in their own backyard. Here at the Garden, we will have bird seed, birdhouses, and bird feeders available to purchase so you can do your part to help wild birds survive the cold winter months!

Member Corner

Our members provide essential support to the Garden and our mission every day.

I decided to join the Garden to enjoy more of the outdoors with my grandchildren. We love to come for picnics on the weekends, and we've shared quality family time together at events like Scarecrow Night Hikes and Galaxy of Lights. We are all looking forward to creating memories at the Garden for many years to come!"

Melanie G. | Garden member since 2020

Learn more about supporting the Garden through membership at:

hsvbg.org/membership | membership@hsvbg.org | 256-830-4447 ext. 255



Learn more at hsvbg.org/Tweetsville

Tweetsville is an immersive experience in the Children's Garden that explores the role that birds play in our ecosystem. Guests can observe birds in their natural environment, learn about their native habitats, and discover how plants, animals, and people rely on each other to create a healthy ecosystem. Tweetsville features the Lewis Bird Watch, dynamic plantings of Alabama native plants, and winding paths that guide learners through the journey. The next phase of Tweetsville is coming soon!

Thank you to our Corporate Partners!

The Corporate Partner program is designed to strengthen the relationship between the Huntsville Botanical Garden and the corporate community in the Greater Huntsville Area. Through the annual support of these Corporate Partners, we can provide first-class programs that allow children, families, and Garden guests to connect to plants and gain a deeper understanding of the role they play in their own environment.

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Learn more about the Corporate Partner program at:

- hsvbg.org/corporate-partners
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- 256-830-4447 ext. 257



Create a Lasting Legacy

Our founders envisioned a beautiful place for our community to enjoy, and they planted a seed that continues to grow into the thriving Garden we know today. You can have the same meaningful impact on the future of our Garden by making or leaving a legacy gift.

You can choose to leave a legacy in two ways: through an immediate gift to the endowment fund or a planned gift. A gift to the endowment fund strengthens the Garden, ensures its long-term financial health, and allows you to make a gift that will give in perpetuity. A planned gift is a thoughtful investment in the future growth of the Garden. By including the Garden in your estate plans, you can meet your own financial needs while also supporting the long-term mission of the Garden.

We would be pleased to work with you and your financial or tax advisor to establish the legacy gift that is most appropriate to achieve your philanthropic and financial goals. If you would like to learn more, please contact development@hsvbg.org or visit hsvbg.org/planned-giving.



The Life of a Tree: Step 10

After a tree dies, it becomes a snag, which provides places for birds to perch and nest.



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"Every leaf speaks bliss to me,
fluttering from the Autumn tree."

Emily Brontë



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